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# LOSING A PARENT TO CANCER AS A TEENAGER

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FAMILY COHESION AND LONG TERM HEALTH  
AND WELLBEING

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"My mom is now in Heaven, watching her little girl, through a peephole in the sky. And I look up and say; Don't you worry about me, I'll always come out on top"

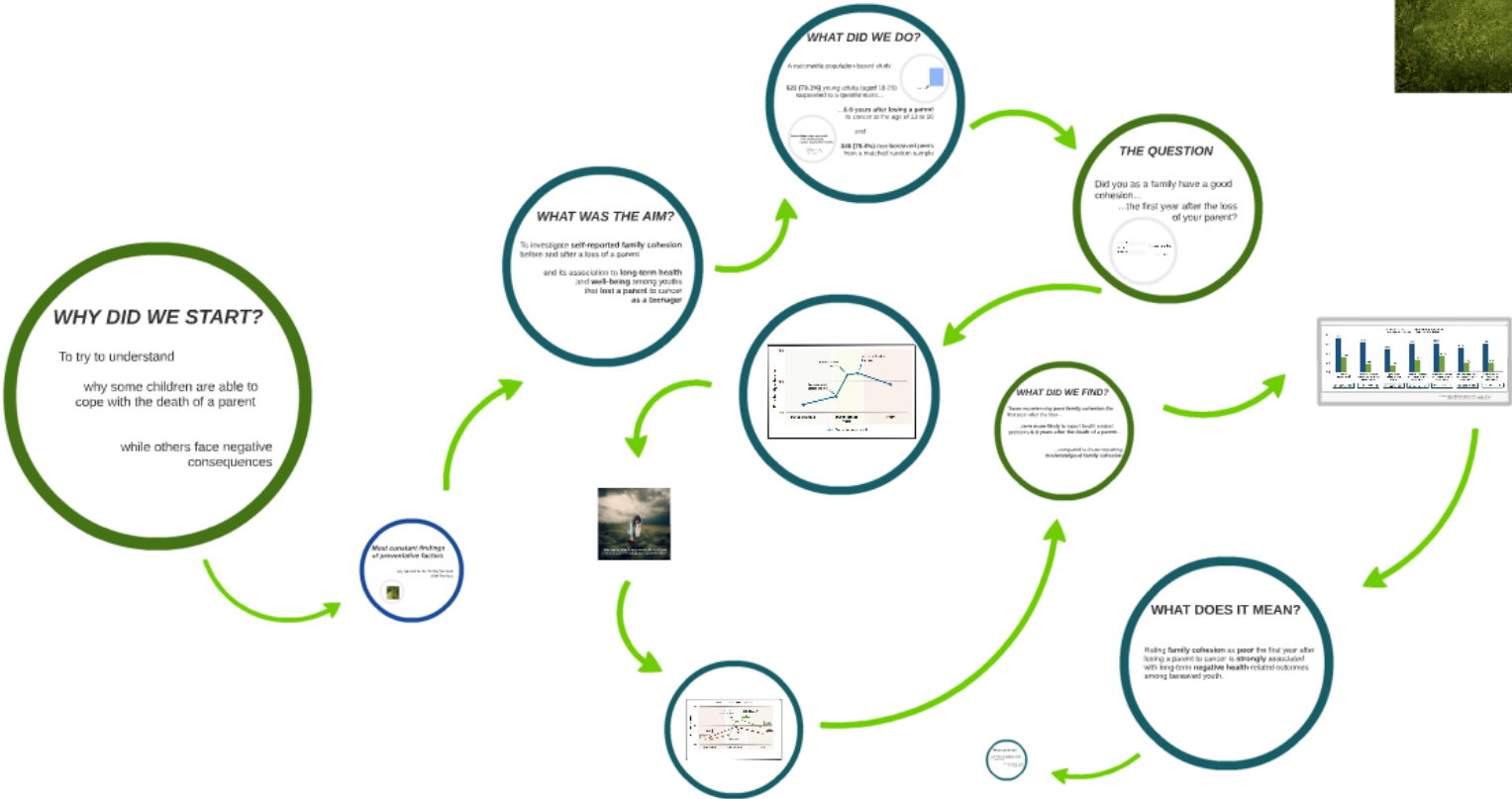


# Family Cohesion after losing a parent to cancer as a teenager

## AND LONG TERM HEALTH AND WELLBEING



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# ***WHY DID WE START?***

To try to understand

why some children are able to  
cope with the death of a parent

while others face negative  
consequences

# ***Most constant findings of preventative factors***

are related to the family function  
after the loss



Family cohesion, warmth and connection between the surviving parent and the bereaved child



## ***WHAT WAS THE AIM?***

To investigate **self-reported family cohesion** before and after a loss of a parent

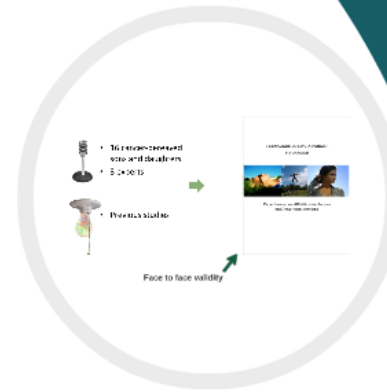
and its association to **long-term health** and **well-being** among youths that **lost a parent** to cancer **as a teenager**



# WHAT DID WE DO?

A nationwide population-based study

**622 (73.1%)** young adults (aged 18-25) responded to a questionnaire...



...**6-9 years after losing a parent** to cancer at the age of 13 to 16

and

**330 (78.4%)** non-bereaved peers from a matched random sample

Associations were assessed with multivariable logistic regression models

Adjusted for  
- Background variables  
- Family related variables  
- Adverse events

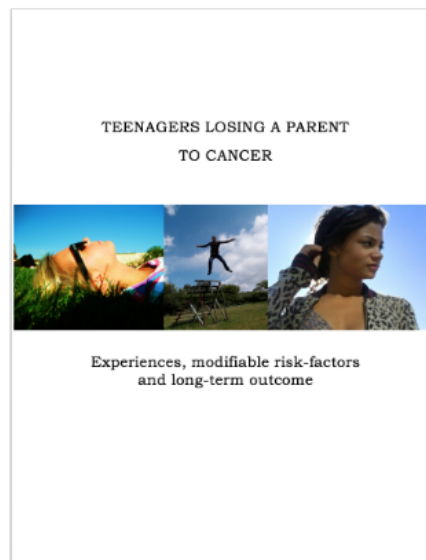
5)



- 16 cancer-bereaved sons and daughters
- 3 experts



- Previous studies



Face to face validity



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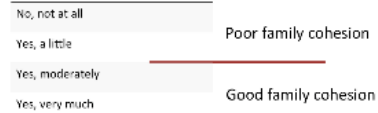
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## ***THE QUESTION***

Did you as a family have a good cohesion...  
...the first year after the loss  
of your parent?



No, not at all

Yes, a little

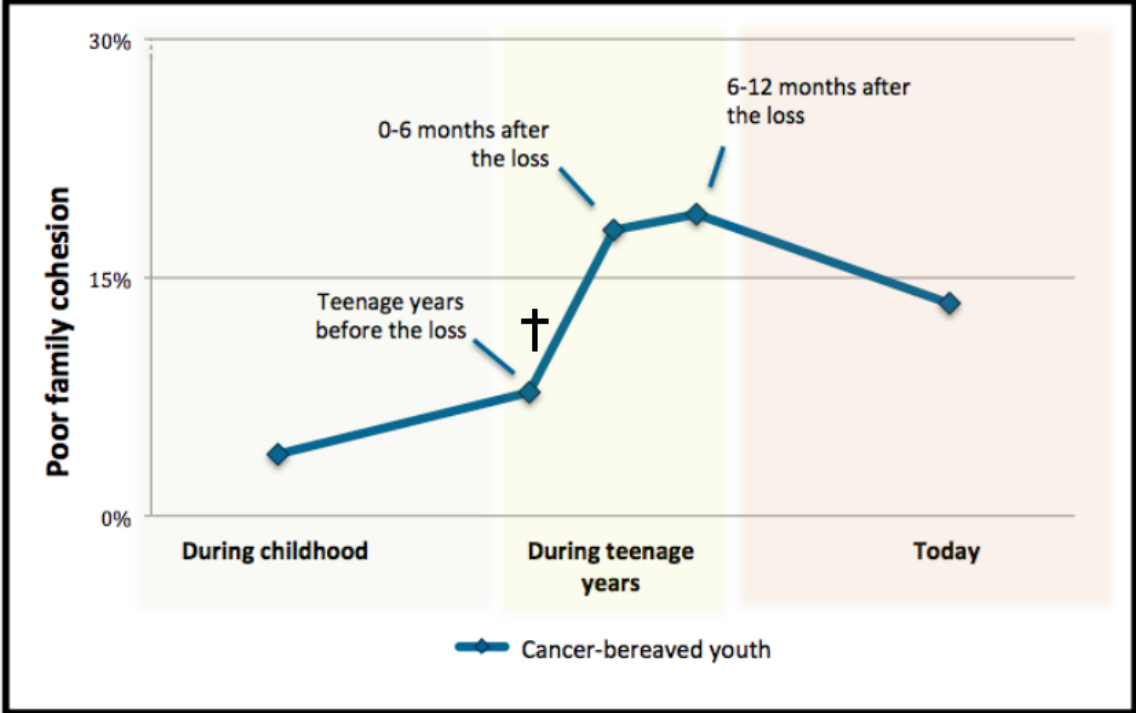
Yes, moderately

Yes, very much

Poor family cohesion

Good family cohesion



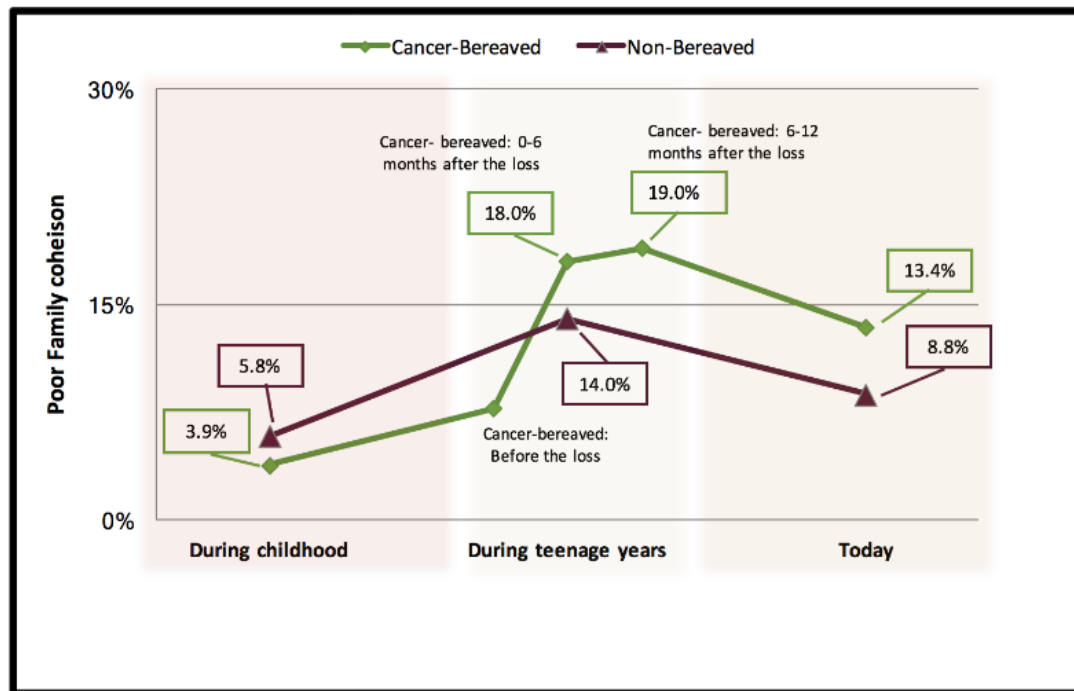




***"After my dad died it was sort of like we all just went into separate rooms and closed the door"***

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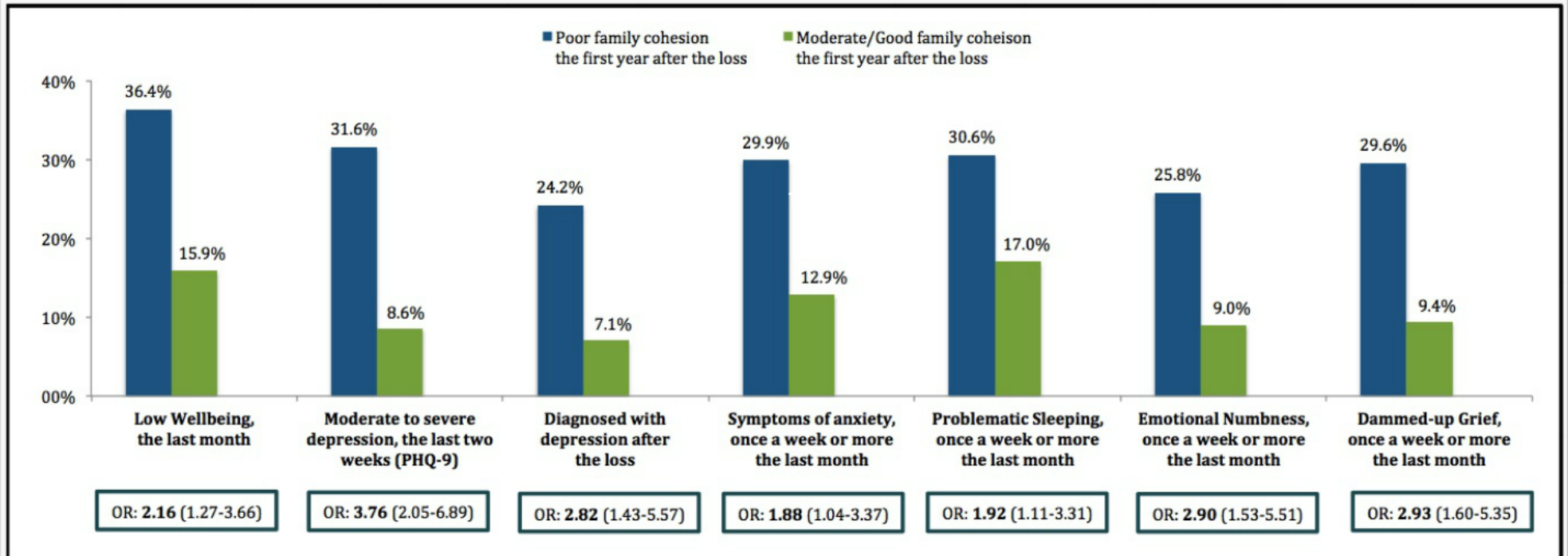


## ***WHAT DID WE FIND?***

Those experiencing **poor family cohesion** the first year after the loss...

...were **more likely** to report health related problems **6-9 years after the death of a parent...**

...compared to those reporting **moderate/good family cohesion**



Unpublished "preliminary" results

These are the results that remained statistically significant after adjusting for a variety of possible confounding factors



## WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

Rating **family cohesion** as **poor** the first year after losing a parent to cancer is **strongly** associated with long-term **negative health**-related outcomes among bereaved youth.

# What can we do?

To give attention to **family cohesion** and provide support, if needed, that **strengthens** family cohesion after a **parents' death**...

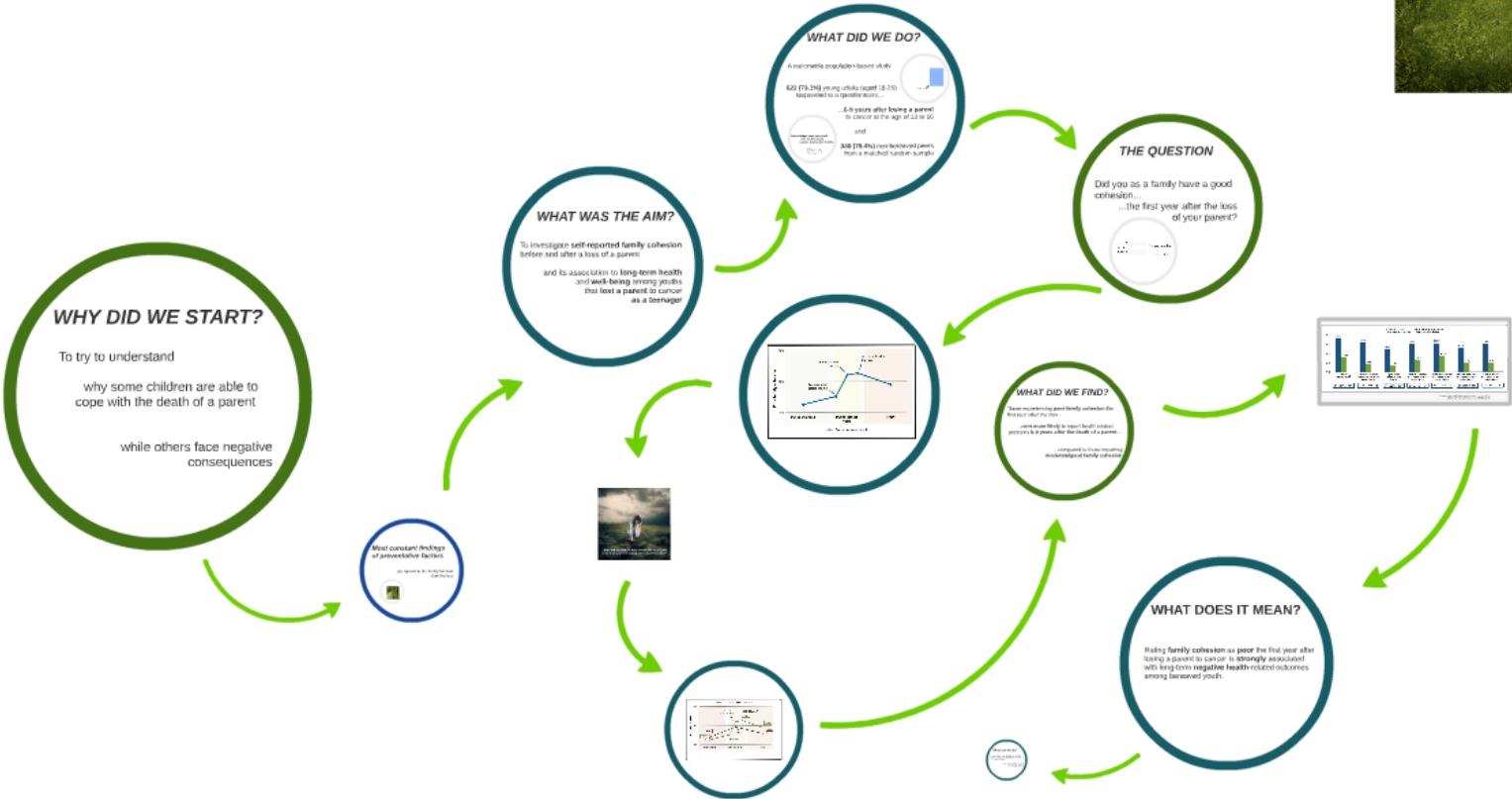
...might prevent **long-term** suffering in their **teenage children**.

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# Thank you !

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